

Amendments to the Claims:

The following listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

1. (Currently Amended) A degradation detection apparatus for an oxygen sensor, comprising:

a first judgment value acquirer that calculates an element impedance real value from a value related to an electric power supplied to the oxygen sensor, and that acquires the calculated value as a first judgment value;

a second judgment value acquirer which calculates an element temperature estimated value of the oxygen sensor from a factor that affects a temperature of the oxygen sensor, and which acquires the calculated value as a second judgment value; and

an abnormality determiner that determines whether the oxygen sensor has an abnormality based on the first judgment value and the second judgment ~~value~~, value,

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if a relationship between the first judgment value and the second judgment value does not agree with a normal temperature characteristic that is exhibited by an element impedance of the oxygen sensor,

wherein the oxygen sensor comprises a sensor element that exhibits the temperature characteristic, and a heater for heating the sensor element,

wherein the factor that affects the temperature of the oxygen sensor includes at least a factor related to a state of operation of the heater, and

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater electrification state detector that detects a state of electrification of the heater, and a sensor element abnormality identifier that, if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation

where the heater is not electrified, identifies the abnormality as an abnormality of the sensor element.

2-3. (Canceled).

4. (Currently Amended) The degradation detection apparatus according to ~~claim 3~~, claim 1, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises an electrification stopper that stops electrification of the heater if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation where the heater is electrified.

5. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 4, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater abnormality determiner that determines that the heater has an abnormality if determination of an abnormality of the oxygen sensor is overturned after the electrification of the heater is stopped by the electrification stopper.

6. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 1,

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a first change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the first judgment value, and a second change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the second judgment value, and

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if the amount of change in the first judgment value and the amount of change in the second judgment value do not exhibit a normal correlation.

7. (Currently Amended) A degradation detection apparatus for an oxygen sensor, comprising:

a first judgment value acquirer that calculates an element impedance real value from a value related to an electric power supplied to the oxygen sensor, and that acquires the calculated value as a first judgment value;

a second judgment value acquirer which calculates an element impedance estimated value from a factor that affects a temperature of the oxygen sensor, and which acquires the calculated value as a second judgment value; and

an abnormality determiner that determines whether the oxygen sensor has an abnormality based on the first judgment value and the second judgment ~~value~~, value,

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if a difference between the first judgment value and the second judgment value exceeds a predetermined criterion,

wherein the oxygen sensor comprises a sensor element that exhibits a temperature characteristic, and a heater for heating the sensor element,

wherein the factor that affects the temperature of the oxygen sensor includes at least a factor related to a state of operation of the heater, and

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater electrification state detector that detects a state of electrification of the heater, and a sensor element abnormality identifier that, if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation where the heater is not electrified, identifies the abnormality as an abnormality of the sensor element.

8-9. (Canceled).

10. (Currently Amended) The degradation detection apparatus according to ~~claim 9~~, claim 7, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises an electrification stopper that stops electrification of the heater if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation where the heater is electrified.

11. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 10, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater abnormality determiner that determines that the heater has an abnormality if determination of an abnormality of the

oxygen sensor is overturned after the electrification of the heater is stopped by the electrification stopper.

12. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 7,

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a first change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the first judgment value, and a second change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the second judgment value, and

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if the amount of change in the first judgment value and the amount of change in the second judgment value do not exhibit a normal correlation.

13. (Currently Amended) A degradation detection apparatus for an oxygen sensor, comprising:

a first judgment value acquirer that calculates an element temperature theoretical value from a value related to an electric power supplied to the oxygen sensor, and that acquires the calculated value as a first judgment value;

a second judgment value acquirer which calculates an element impedance estimated value from a factor that affects a temperature of the oxygen sensor, and which acquires the calculated value as a second judgment value; and

an abnormality determiner that determines whether the oxygen sensor has an abnormality based on the first judgment value and the second judgment ~~value~~, value,

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if a relationship between the first judgment value and the second judgment value does not agree with a normal temperature characteristic that is exhibited by an element impedance of the oxygen sensor.

wherein the oxygen sensor comprises a sensor element that exhibits the temperature characteristic, and a heater for heating the sensor element,

wherein the factor that affects the temperature of the oxygen sensor includes at least a factor related to a state of operation of the heater, and

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater electrification state detector that detects a state of electrification of the heater, and a sensor element abnormality identifier that, if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation where the heater is not electrified, identifies the abnormality as an abnormality of the sensor element.

14-15. (Canceled).

16. (Currently Amended) The degradation detection apparatus according to ~~claim 15,~~ claim 13, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises an electrification stopper that stops electrification of the heater if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation where the heater is electrified.

17. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 16, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater abnormality determiner that determines that the heater has an abnormality if determination of an abnormality of the oxygen sensor is overturned after the electrification of the heater is stopped by the electrification stopper.

18. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 13,

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a first change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the first judgment value, and a second change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the second judgment value, and

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if the amount of change in the first judgment value and the amount of change in the second judgment value do not exhibit a normal correlation.

19. (Currently Amended) A degradation detection apparatus for an oxygen sensor, comprising:

a first judgment value acquirer that calculates an element temperature theoretical value from a value related to an electric power supplied to the oxygen sensor, and that acquires the calculated value as a first judgment value;

a second judgment value acquirer which calculates an element temperature estimated value from a factor that affects a temperature of the oxygen sensor, and which acquires the calculated value as a second judgment value; and

an abnormality determiner that determines whether the oxygen sensor has an abnormality based on the first judgment value and the second judgment ~~value~~, value,

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if a difference between the first judgment value and the second judgment value exceeds a predetermined criterion,

wherein the oxygen sensor comprises a sensor element that exhibits a temperature characteristic, and a heater for heating the sensor element,

wherein the factor that affects the temperature of the oxygen sensor includes at least a factor related to a state of operation of the heater, and

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater electrification state detector that detects a state of electrification of the heater, and a sensor element abnormality identifier that, if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation where the heater is not electrified, identifies the abnormality as an abnormality of the sensor element.

20-21. (Canceled).

22. (Currently Amended) The degradation detection apparatus according to ~~claim 21,~~claim 19, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises an electrification stopper that stops electrification of the heater if it is determined that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality in a situation where the heater is electrified.

23. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 22, wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a heater abnormality determiner that determines that the heater has an abnormality if determination of an abnormality of the oxygen sensor is overturned after the electrification of the heater is stopped by the electrification stopper.

24. (Previously Presented) The degradation detection apparatus according to claim 19,

wherein the abnormality determiner comprises a first change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the first judgment value, and a second change amount detector that detects an amount of change in the second judgment value, and

wherein the abnormality determiner determines that the oxygen sensor has an abnormality if the amount of change in the first judgment value and the amount of change in the second judgment value do not exhibit a normal correlation.

25-48. (Canceled)